

American Spiritual Ensemble

Sunday, February 22, 2009 • 4 p.m.

Asbury United
Methodist Church



Comprised of some of the finest voices in the world, the internationally acclaimed ensemble offers stirring renditions of Negro spirituals, Broadway songs and other music in the African-American tradition.

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

The concert is sponsored by Asbury United Methodist Church; the Peter and Judy Jackson Music Performance Fund; Salisbury University's Department of Music, Office of the Dean of the Charles R. and Martha N. Fulton School of Liberal Arts and Office of Multicultural Student Services; the SU Foundation, Inc.; and is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council, awarded by the Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

EVERETT MCCORVEY, FOUNDER AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

www.americanspiritualensemble.com

PROGRAM

- Walk Together, Childrenarr. William Henry Smith
- We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peacearr. Moses Hogan
- Plenty Good Roomarr. William Henry Smith
- Oh, What A Beautiful City!arr. Johnie Dean
Mari-Yan Pringle, Jeryl Cunningham, Sopranos
- I Want Jesus to Walk With Mearr. Eurydice Osterman/Tedrin Blair Lindsay
Ricky Little, Baritone
- Fi-yer, Fi-yer Lord (from the operetta *Fi-yer!*).....Hall Johnson/Langston Hughes
Robert Mack, Tenor
- I've Been 'Bukedarr. Hall Johnson
- I Wanna Be Readyarr. James Miller
Hope Koehler, Soprano Soloist
- Sit Down, Servant, Sit Down!.....arr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay
Alfonse Anderson, Frederick Jackson, Ricky Little,
Robert Mack and John Wesley Wright
- O Redeemed!arr. Uzee Brown Jr.
Laurence Albert, Bass
- Here's One.....arr. William Grant Still
John Wesley Wright, Tenor
- Give Me Jesusarr. Mark Hayes
Calesta Day, Soprano
- Ezekiel Saw de Wheelarr. William L. Dawson
Larry Hylton, Tenor Soloist
- Didn't My Lord Deliver Danielarr. Moses Hogan

INTERMISSION

COLLABORATION

The American Spiritual Ensemble joined by the Salisbury University Chorale

The Battle of Jerichoarr. Moses Hogan

Behold the Stararr. William L. Dawson
Lisa Clark, Soprano John Wesley Wright, Tenor

Lift Every Voice and SingJ. Rosamond Johnson/James Weldon Johnson/arr. Roland Carter

THE FUTURE GENERATION

African-American Spirituals featuring voice students from the Salisbury University
Department of Music and the high school community

Ride Up In the Chariotarr. Betty Jackson King
Monica Harwood, Soprano
Sophomore/Music Education Major

Deep Riverarr. Moses Hogan
Terron Quailes, Bass-Baritone
Sophomore/Music Education Major

Lord, How Come Me Here?Traditional/arr. Saywell
Jesse Saywell, Tenor
Sophomore/Parkside High School

Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seenarr. Jay Althouse
Laurel Noone, Mezzo-Soprano James Burks Jr., Alto Saxophone
Senior/Voice Major Junior/Business Major

BROADWAY AND THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

- Free at Last (from *Big River*).....Roger Miller and William Hauptman
Ivan Griffin, Soloist
- Old Man River (from *Showboat*)Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein
Kevin Thompson, Bass
- Bring Him Home (from *Les Misérables*)Claude-Michel Schoenberg/Alain Boublil
John Wesley Wright, tenor
- Over the Rainbow (from *The Wizard of Oz*)Harold Arlen/arr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay
Andrea Jones-Sojola and Ensemble
- Circle of Life (from *The Lion King*)Elton John and Tim Rice
Sabrina Elyane Carten, Jondra Harmon, Larry Hylton, John Wesley Wright and Ensemble

Program Subject to Change

AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

The American Spiritual Ensemble was founded by **Everett McCorvey** in 1995. This summer the American Spiritual Ensemble celebrates its 11th tour of Spain. In Spain alone, the American Spiritual Ensemble has performed over 90 concerts. Its members have sung in theatres and opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera and abroad in Italy, Germany, Britain, Scotland, Spain and Japan. The repertoire ranges from opera to spirituals to Broadway. The members of the American Spiritual Ensemble are soloists in their own right and the vocalists have thrilled audiences around the world with their dynamic renditions of classic spirituals, jazz and Broadway numbers highlighting the Black experience.

Everett McCorvey is a native of Montgomery, AL. He received his degrees from the University of Alabama, including a Doctorate of Musical Arts. As a tenor soloist, Dr. McCorvey has performed in major centers around the world including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Radio City Music Hall in New York, and in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, China, Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics. During the summers, McCorvey is on the artist faculty of the American Institute of Musical Study (AIMS) in Graz, Austria, and the Intermezzo Opera Program in Palm Beach, FL. McCorvey holds an Endowed Chair Voice and is Director of Opera at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY.

Members of the American Spiritual Ensemble

Sopranos

Lisa Clark
Calesta Day
Jeryl Cunningham- Fleming
Mari-Yan Pringle
Andrea Jones-Sojola

Altos

Kathy Bullock
Sabrina Carten
Jondra Harmon
Hope Koehler
Linda Thompson Williams

Tenors

Alfonse Anderson
Barron Coleman
Larry Hylton
Robert Mack
John Wesley Wright

Basses

Laurence Albert
Keith Dean
Ivan Griffin
Frederick Jackson
Ricky Little
Sam McDonald
Kenneth Overton
Kevin Thompson
Tay Seals

Piano

Tedrin Blair Lindsay

African Drum

Ricky Little
Everett McCorvey

Everett McCorvey, Founder and Music Director
Ricky Little, Assistant Conductor
James E. Lee, Company Manager
Peggy Stamps, Assistant Company Manager
Andrea Jones Sojola, Company Assistant
Kevin Thompson, Company Assistant

The American Spiritual Ensemble is represented in the United States by
Alkahest Artists & Attractions, Inc.

888-728-8989

info@Alkahestartists.net or www.Alkahestartists.net

VISIT THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE WEB SITE

www.americanspiritualensemble.com

SOLOIST BIOGRAPHIES

Laurence Albert, Bass-Baritone

Laurence Albert's career has spanned more than 30 years. He has sung a repertoire of 50 operatic roles, and 300 songs in seven languages internationally since his debut with the Detroit Opera in 1977. A native of Memphis, TN, he studied classical singing with Edward Zambara, Wendell Whalum, Willis Patterson and Ethel Maxwell. He has studied interpretation with John Wustman, Gerard Souzay, Erik Werba, Hans Hotter, Walter Berry and Brigitte Fassbender. Laurence Albert was the first African-American to represent the Mid-South Region at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions held at Lincoln Center in New York (he shared his national prize with Susan Dunn, Thomas Hampson and eight other talented singers). He is prizewinner of the Concours de Chant de Paris (Opera and Song), the International Concours Tryptique de Paris (French Melodie) and twice the Franz Schubert Institut Prize of Austria (German Lieder). Conductors include Sir Michael Tippett, Mung-Whun Chung, Robert Shaw, Leonard Slatkin, John Nelson, Gary Bertini and Rudolf Werthen. Albert's recordings include the historic Enesco "Oedipe" recording by EMI-Pathe-Marconi, featuring Jose Van Dam and the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, Lawrence Foster, conducting. The premiere recording of Aubert Lemeland's "Laure, ou la Lettre au Cachet Rouge" on the Skarbo label with the Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie, Marc Tardue, conducting. Handel's *Messiah* on the Musick's Monument label with the Gioia Della Musica Praha conducted by Marc Brown, "The K'dusha Symphony" written and conducted by Abraham Kaplan, featuring Roberta Peters on the Camerata Singers, Inc. label, and Haydn's "Lord Nelson Mass" with the Orchestra of the Golden Age conducted by Denis McCaldin on the Meridian label. As a pedagogue, Albert is sought after for his master classes and seminars. In Europe, Albert has given master classes for Les Semaines Musicales de Quimper Festival, BalCanto Chorus of Basel, Switzerland and l'Ecole d'Ete Claude Debussy. Between 1996 and 2002, Albert conducted the Parisian choral society "The Voice of Freedom" dedicated to the performance of the American Negro Spiritual. He is currently adjunct professor of voice at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN.

Alfonse Anderson, Tenor

Alfonse Anderson has performed in operas, recitals and concerts for over 35 years. In the United States and Europe he has performed with such notable organizations as the Houston Grand Opera, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, Teatro Municipal Sao Paulo, Teatro Sols Montevideo, Arizona Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Minnesota Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Oakland Opera, Virginia Opera, Opera Francais, Opera South, Opera Columbus, Opera North and Opera Las Vegas. Anderson has performed in concert and oratorio with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center and in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., Chautauqua Symphony, Illinois Symphony, Grant Park Orchestra in Chicago, Warsaw Symphony and Krakow Symphony in Poland, Las Vegas Philharmonic and the Henderson Symphony. He also performs frequently in recitals, concerts and master classes throughout the U.S. The world premier of the opera *Bandana* by Daron Hagen was released in summer 2006 on Albany Records with Anderson singing the role of the "Leader." Alfonse can be heard on various recordings with the American Spiritual Ensemble and most recently appears on the 2007 DVD release titled *The Spiritual* by PBS. He has taught voice for over 30 years and in that time his students have won international, national and regional vocal competitions with such notable organizations as the MET Opera, NATSAA, Leontyne Price, Marian Anderson, Mario Lanza, Meistersinger, Belvedere and Palm Spring Vocal Competition to name a

few. Many of his students have performed in young artist programs, such as the internationally recognized Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, Aspen Musical Festival, San Francisco Opera, American Institute of Musical Studies, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Chautauqua Opera, Des Moines Opera, Opera North, Sarasota Opera and Portland Opera. In Las Vegas, Anderson serves as the Regional Governor of NATS and is a very active adjudicator for competitions and a master vocal clinician throughout the U.S. He can regularly be heard singing in concert, recital and opera with The Tenors-4 and with a variety of local opera companies and symphonies. Anderson is currently associate professor of voice at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Sabrina Elayne Carten, Mezzo Soprano

Sabrina Elayne Carten, a native of New York City, began her career with The Chautauqua Symphony in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. This opera remains a staple in Carten's repertoire and she has performed it in theatres around the world including Theater Des Westens in Berlin, Germany, The Caesarea Amphitheater in Israel, Houston Grand Opera with Maestro John DeMain, Virginia Opera with Maestro Peter Mark, New Orleans Opera and New York City Opera in the March 2002 Live from Lincoln Center broadcast. At Mobile Opera, Carten has performed Queenie in *Showboat* and Marian Anderson in *I Am Marian Anderson*. She reprised the role of Queenie in the National Tour of Hal Prince's production of *Showboat*, appearing in many major U.S. cities. At both Chautauqua Opera and Mobile Opera, Carten has appeared as Tituba in *The Crucible*. She has sung Mrs. Noye in Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* with the Rochester Oratorio Society. Also with the Rochester Oratorio Society in Cracow, Poland, Carten sang the international premiere performance of *An Atheist Mass*. Maestro Julius Williams invited her to sing Queen Ayat and Cecilia Lightfoot in Shauneille Perry's Off-Broadway revival of *In Dahomey*. Carten has been a featured soloist in international performances with the New York Harlem Gospel Singers. In a landmark performance of their new season, the Dance Theatre of Harlem featured Carten as Della in Johnny Mercer's *Saint Louis Woman*. She is a frequent guest soloist and recitalist at Albany State University in Georgia and has also appeared with the Albany Symphony in the cantata *A Tribute to the Victims of September 11th*.

Barron Coleman, Tenor

Barron Coleman has performed in the best opera theaters in the world entertaining audiences from Milan to Paris to Sydney and Japan. A native son of the lone star state, he also has many important national debuts to his credit including Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera and Dallas Opera. Coleman spent 2000-2002 in Barcelona singing at the Liceu lending his voice to the roles of the messenger in *Aida*, le premier Philistin in *Samson et Dalila* and Maintop in *Billy Budd*. During fall 2003, Coleman had the pleasure of singing his first zarzuela in a new production of the Spanish favorite *Luisa Fernanda* by Toroba with Los Amigos de la Zarzuela in New York City. Mostly recently, Coleman returned to the New York concert stage singing revivals of *Revelations and Rainbow* with America's leading dance company Alvin Ailey, in addition to concerts with Opera Noire of New York in both Washington, D.C., and New York City. Coleman's repertoire choices stretch from the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* to the demanding role of Tony in Henze's masterpiece *Elegy for Young Lovers*. An alumnus of The Juilliard School, The Manhattan School of Music and Southern Methodist University, Coleman holds degrees in vocal pedagogy, music education and psychology.

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Soprano

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, a native New Yorker, has performed in Europe, Japan and the United States. She made her debut, while still an undergraduate student, with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra in a concert version of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and has since then gone on to sing the roles of Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) at the Ernen Musikdorf Festival in Switzerland; Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) with the Mannes Opera in New York; Clara (*Porgy and Bess*) in Germany, the Netherlands and Japan; and most recently, the Mother (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), the Flower Woman (Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*), the Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), La Fortuna (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) and most recently, the Queen on the Night (*The Magic Flute*) with the University of Kentucky Opera Theater. An artist of great sensitivity, Cunningham-Fleming has appeared in recital and as a concert soloist in venues that include the United Nations and New York's Lincoln Center. She has also recorded Schubert's *Mass in G major* as soloist with the Boy's Choir of Harlem. In addition to the classical repertoire, Cunningham-Fleming is an outstanding interpreter of traditional music from the rich African-American heritage. She is a regular soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble and has toured with them through out Europe and the United States. She is also an alumna of the Girls Choir of Harlem. Furthermore, her innovative recital programming frequently includes works by African-American composers. Cunningham-Fleming holds a Master of Music from the Mannes College of Music in New York and a Bachelor of Arts from Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Kentucky under the supervision of Dr. Everett McCorvey.

Calesta A. Day, Soprano

Calesta A. Day made her operatic debut as Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* with Miami University Opera. She has also appeared as a Slave Chorister in the premier of *Margaret Garner* with Cincinnati Opera and Countess Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Miami University and Bowling Green State University Opera. Day performed and premiered the role of Alice in *The Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with Sinclair Community College Theatre. She was Third Spirit in *Cendrillon* with Bowling Green State University Opera, guest soloist in *Eubie* with Theater Under the Stars and The Angel in *The Greatest Gift* with Doug Toles Productions. A Dayton-area performer for years, Day has appeared with such groups as Bobby Jones Gospel, James Cleveland and the Gospel Music Workshop of America, and with the late Ronald Winans. Day is serving as music director of the children's choir at Wesley United Methodist Church. She was the vocal director for the Dayton Playhouse's production of *Five Guys Named Moe* and Theater Under the Stars' production of *Eubie*. Day received a bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University in vocal performance, a master's degree in education with a music concentration from University of Dayton and a master's degree in vocal performance from Miami University. Day is currently studying with Dr. Everett McCorvey as a third year doctoral student in vocal performance at the University of Kentucky.

Ivan Griffin, Baritone

Ivan Griffin is a versatile artist whose experiences range from opera to musical theater. He has been praised for his roles ranging from Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* to Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies*. He has performed with numerous companies throughout the United States and abroad, including Michigan Opera Theater, Buffalo Lyric Opera, South Carolina Opera and Great Lakes Lyric Opera, the United Kingdom, South Africa and in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Holland in his recent portrayal of the roles of Lawyer Frazier and Jake in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with New

York Harlem Productions. His oratorio repertoire includes the baritone/bass roles in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, the requiems of Brahms and Mozart, Mozart's *Mass in C*, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* and Haydn's *Mass in D Minor*. Other performances include the World's Fair, the International Thomas Merton Society and the 1996 Summer Olympic Celebrate Faith and Arts Atlanta Concert Series. He has been awarded fellowships to the Bach Aria Festival and Institute in Stony Brook, NY, and the Kent/Blossom Music Festival in Kent, OH. Griffin's orchestral engagements include the Toledo Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, Rochester (NY) Philharmonic, South Carolina, Nashville, Savannah, Bangor, and Flint symphony orchestras under such noted conductors as Philippe Entremont, Isaiah Jackson, Nicholas Smith, Kenneth Schermerhorn, Chelsea Tipton II, Werner Torkanowsky, Donald Neuen and Enrique Diemecke. Griffin holds a Bachelor of Music from Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA, as a student of Aldrich W. Adkins, and a Master of Music in performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music as a student of Seth McCoy.

Frederick Jackson, Bass-Baritone

Frederick Jackson is a native of Atlanta, GA. He just completed the 2007-2008 season in the Zurich Opera's International Opera Studio. Jackson has also been engaged as a young artist with the Virginia Opera and completed his studies at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He recently made his debut at the Hamburgische Staatsoper this past summer as Giove in a production of *La Calisto*. Other roles to his credit include Dandini (*La Cenerentola*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Mandarin (*Turandot*) and Figaro (*Le Nozze di Figaro*).

Jondra Harmon, Mezzo-Soprano

Jondra Harmon holds a Bachelor of Arts in voice and bassoon from Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina and a Master of Music in voice performance from the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Her past teachers include Patricia Harrelson and Marianna Busching. While at Peabody, Harmon performed the role of the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* as part of the Peabody Outreach Opera, a program dedicated to exposing school-age children throughout Maryland to music and opera. She also performed Cornelia in scenes from Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, with baroque orchestra, under the direction of Webb Wiggins. Harmon received acclaim for her role in the premiere production of *Ophelia Forever*, a chamber opera for three women written by rising composer Amy Beth Kirsten. Additional opera credits for Harmon include Madame Flora in *The Medium*, the title role in excerpts from *Carmen* and Mother in the children's opera *Little Red Riding Hood*. In 2003, Harmon made her European debut as Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica* with Operafestival di Roma, in Rome, Italy. While in Rome she also portrayed Suzuki in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Clara in *Porgy and Bess*, and appeared in *L'elisir d'amore*. Harmon toured with the Young Artist Residency Program at Kentucky Opera in Louisville, KY. While a resident, she appeared as Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Gertrude in a touring production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*. Harmon was also featured in the Great American Voices Tour, bringing highlights from popular operas and American musicals to military bases and public schools throughout the United States. Oratorio work includes soloist in the Durufle's *Requiem* with the Louisville Choral Arts Society, Handel's *Messiah* with the Handel Choir of Baltimore and Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* with the Shepherd University Masterworks Concert Series. Harmon currently teaches voice and bassoon in the Fredericksburg, VA, area and she sings regularly with the Washington National Opera Chorus under the direction of Maestro Plácido Domingo.

Larry D. Hylton, Tenor

Larry D. Hylton is a highly sought after soloist, vocal coach and clinician. A native of Martinsville, VA, Hylton is a graduate of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C. After acquiring an artist's diploma, he continued vocal music studies at Carnegie Mellon University and Morgan State University. Hylton has appeared as a vocalist in every major performance venue in the Washington, D.C. area. He continues to broaden his artistry and expand his repertoire by venturing into the world of musical theater. *The Washington Post* has described his voice as "... polished and affecting." Hylton made his international debut in 2003 as Sportin' Life in the Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* at Theatre des Westens in Berlin, Germany. He has subsequently performed the roles of Sportin' Life, Mingo and Crab Man in over 350 performances of *Porgy and Bess* in 11 different countries around the world. Hylton made his mark on the D.C. theater scene in several productions, including Hammerstein's *Carmen Jones*, under the baton of Maestro Placido Domingo, Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, Debbie Allen's *Soul Possessed*, Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity* (Kennedy Center), Richard Oberacker's *The Gospel According to Fishman*, William Finn's *Elegies: A Song Cycle* (Signature Theater) and *Timbuktu* (Ira Aldridge Theater). His crystal clear tenor has been heard in concert, oratorio and recital throughout the United States and abroad. He attributes his artistic versatility to the genius of famed composers/conductors Dr. Nathan Carter, Moses Hogan, Robert Shaw and Placido Domingo. A former touring member of the world renowned Moses Hogan Singers, Hylton appears on several of the group's CD recordings, including *Ezekiel Saw de Wheel* and *A Home in that Rock*. He has also recorded for GIA and OCP publications.

Hope Koehler, Soprano

Hope Koehler has appeared with many opera companies and orchestras, such as Nashville Opera, Tennessee Opera Theatre, Blair Opera Theatre, MTSU Opera Theatre, University Opera Theatre in Tuscaloosa, AL, Northland Opera Theatre Experience, Lyric Opera of the North, Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra, Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra, Lake Superior Chamber Orchestra, Lexington Symphony Orchestra and Itasca Symphony Orchestra. With these companies she has appeared in such productions as *Carmen*, *Il Trovatore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto*, *The Impresario*, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *La Bohème*, *Der Freischütz*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Gianni Schicchi* and in the title roles of *Tosca*, *Carmen*, *Fidelio*, *Madama Butterfly* and others. Koehler's operetta and musical theatre performances include *The Mikado*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Pajama Game*, *Oklahoma*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *West Side Story*. Koehler has performed as a soloist in oratorio and other choral orchestral works, such as Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Vesperae solennes di confessore*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* (Resurrection) and many others. Koehler has also been on the faculty of the prestigious Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts for seven years and in 2006 served as chair of the vocal music department. In addition, in July and August 2006 she was a member of the voice faculty at the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. In June 2008 Albany Records released Koehler's recording of John Jacob Niles songs titled *The Lass from the Low Countree*, performed with James Douglass at the piano and produced by the American Spiritual Ensemble organization. Koehler received her Bachelor of Arts in vocal performance and music education at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN, and her Master of Music in vocal performance at the University of Alabama. Her Doctor of Musical Arts was completed at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, where she studied with tenor Everett McCorvey and soprano Gail Robinson. She is currently on the voice faculty at West Virginia University.

Ricky Little, Baritone

Ricky Little is a native of Winston-Salem, NC. He attended Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in music. As a University Fellow at The Ohio State University, Little earned a Master of Arts in vocal pedagogy and Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal performance. During this time he also completed studies in opera performance at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Little has been engaged in hundreds of creative productions in North America, Europe, Asia and South America. He has given more than 100 international performances on four continents, which include 18 countries and over 25 major cities. To date, he has participated in 20 major professional tours, encompassing over 20 international music festivals. He has performed in some of the most prestigious music halls in the world and before royalty and heads of states, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton. His work has been reviewed in national and international newspapers, and has been aired over the ABC, TBN, KET and BET television networks. Performances given by Little on the international stage have been broadcast over radio and television in Italy, Spain, East Germany, Great Britain, Brazil and other countries in South America. He can be seen in the films *Impresario* and *The Spirituals*, and he can be heard on four CD recordings. Little has also been recognized by the Alabama Music Hall of Fame for his work as conductor with the Aeolians of Oakwood College. In 2003, the Aeolians were given a bronze star in the Hall of Fame. Currently, Little holds the position of associate professor of voice at Morehead State University in Morehead, KY, and is assistant conductor of the American Spiritual Ensemble.

Tedrin Blair Lindsay, Pianist

Tedrin Blair Lindsay was raised in Rome, Italy, and has been a professional accompanist since the age of 10. He performs well over 100 recitals annually, boasting a huge repertoire of vocal and instrumental chamber works, with specialties in 20th century French and American music. Lindsay is presently on the opera faculty at the University of Kentucky (UK), where he works as vocal coach and musical director. His UK productions have included Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land*, Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, and seven incarnations of UK's annual Broadway revue *It's a Grand Night for Singing*. Additionally, he played the harpsichord continuo for UK's Mozart productions of *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He also teaches the popular Introduction to Opera course for the Lexington Opera Society, and for several years he has hosted the Opera Quiz intermission feature for the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions at both the district and regional levels. While in Kentucky, Lindsay has collaborated several times with Actors' Guild of Lexington—as award-winning musical director for Sondheim's *Assassins* and William Finn's *Falsettos*, and as composer of an elaborate score for *Angels in America: Perestroika* by Tony Kushner. Lindsay has also worked with such New York companies as Bel Canto Opera, Golden Fleece Opera, Westchester Opera, Rockwell Productions and the off-Broadway Lamb's Theatre Company. In the early 1990s, he traveled as musical director of the first two national tours of Randy Courts and Mark St. Germain's *The Gifts of the Magi*, and another national tour of Roger Miller's *Big River*. Lindsay is a Ph.D. candidate in musicology at UK, completing a dissertation on the topic of mid-20th century American opera. He also occasionally appears as an actor, with credits including the 1978 Bernardo Bertolucci film *Luna* starring Jill Clayburgh and Matthew Barry.

Robert Mack, Tenor

Robert Mack, has received glorious reviews for his powerful but sweet lyric tenor voice. Mack has just returned from performing as the Gospel Singer in *Marie Galante* with Opéra Française de New York. In addition, Mack appeared in concert at the Bard Festival and as Emmett in the opera *Emmett Till*, the *Cantata Darfur* with Trilogy Opera and Spoleto Festival's premier of *Amistad*, where the critics made mention of his very solid performance. His career highlights include several years as a principal artist at New York City Opera, Lud (*A White House Cantata*) with Collegiate Chorale, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Beppe (*Il Pagliacci*) with NYCO and Opera Carolina, Remus (*Treemonisha*) with The Collegiate Chorale, Snake/Vain Man (*The Little Prince*) with NYCO, Fenton (*Falstaff*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*) with The Martina Arroyo Foundation, Goro (*Madama Butterfly*), Remendado (*Carmen*), the Ballad Singer (*Of Mice and Men*), Pong (*Turandot*), Arturo (*Lucia Di Lammermoor*) and Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) all with NYCO. Mack debuted the role of Sportin' Life (*Porgy and Bess*) with NYCO and Opera Carolina and recorded the role of Sportin' Life with the Nashville Symphony on Decca Records. Mack has toured with the nationally acclaimed Three Mo' Tenors and in addition has made important appearances at the following Opera companies: Houston Grand Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Indianapolis Opera and Syracuse Opera. He was also a featured tenor soloist for The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre's signature work "Revelations." In past seasons he made debuts with the Bastille in Paris and the Teatro Real in Spain, as well as, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Luxembourg. Mack toured with Broadway's National and European tour of *Smokey Joe's Café* directed by Jerry Zaks, and in 2002 he was directed by Stewart Lane in the production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Mack enjoys involvement with the New York Festival of Song, American Opera Projects and is co-founder of Opera Noire of New York. Upcoming engagements include Pang (*Turandot*) with Opera Carolina.

Mari-Yan Pringle, Soprano

Mari-Yan Pringle (pronounced Mah-Ree-YAHN) is a recent graduate of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, where she earned a Master of Music with both the prestigious Performer's and Catherine Filene Shouse Arts Leadership certificates. A proud graduate of Spellman College in Atlanta, GA, Pringle currently resides in New York City where she studies with Joan Lader. Pringle is a Resident Artist with the Opera Company of Brooklyn where she is engaged to sing Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) and Mrs. Gleaton (*Susannah*) during the 2008-2009 season. She has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman-Rochester Chorus and Eastman Philharmonic. She has sung the roles of Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Mme. Lidoine (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*), Mrs. Grose (*Turn of the Screw*-scene) and Cio-Cio San (*Madama Butterfly*-scene) and her oratorio credits include Johannes Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and Ludwig Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. Pringle studied at Music Academy of the West (MAW) under the tutelage of Marilyn Horne, Warren Jones, John Churchwell, Linda Jones, Heinz Blankenburg and the late Randall Behr. At MAW, she was selected to participate in the Distinguished Alumna Concert honoring Grace Bumbry and covered Anaide in *Il Capello di Firenze*. She has also studied at the Centro Studi Italiani in Urbania, Italy, and sung in master classes with the late Sylvia Oden Lee, the late William Warfield, Louise Toppin and famed American sopranos Indra Thomas, Renee Fleming and Deborah Voigt. Pringle is the recipient of numerous awards and honors. She is a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (Georgia District), Florida Grand Opera and Pittsburgh Opera Center Finalist, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Rising Star Competition, Friends of Eastman Opera Competition, Washington International Competition (second

place) and Young Alumna-Rising Star Award from the New York Alumnae Chapter of the National Association of Spellman College. Pringle is a frequent speaker at schools, places of worship and community events, actively promoting the value of education as well as encouraging young people to pursue personal and cultural development opportunities.

Andrea Jones-Sojola, Soprano

Andrea Jones-Sojola hails from Louisville, KY. She is currently touring with the critically acclaimed trio 3 Mo Divas in cities such as Buffalo, Washington, D.C., and Edmonton, Canada. She has been seen recently on the stages of Dayton Opera in the roles of Frasquita in *Carmen* and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*. Jones-Sojola performed in *Muhammad Ali: Outside the Ring* for Kentucky Opera. She sang the role of Lonnie (Ali's wife) and had the honor of singing it for the "Champ" himself. She has also performed in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. She performs in music festivals across Spain as a featured soloist in concerts with the American Spiritual Ensemble. In Poland, she sang the role of Clara in *Porgy and Bess* under the baton of Maestro Mariusz Smolij. In Italy, she sang Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* under the baton of Maestro Mark Gibson. Jones-Sojola also sang the role of Despina in *Costi fan tutte* in Cairo, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. Other roles include Fanny in *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, Ninetta in *La Finta Semplice*, Ms. Honey in *Three's Company*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and Sister Rose in *Dead Man Walking*. Jones-Sojola has participated in several music festivals such as the Young Artist Program with Cincinnati Opera, Aspen Opera Theater, Banff 20th Century Opera and Song Program, Opera Theater of Lucca, Italy, and Chautauqua Institute of Music. Most recently she was an Artist-in-Residence with Dayton Opera. She received her Artist Diploma in Opera from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, her M.M. in voice from the University of Kentucky and her B.A. in voice from Lincoln University. Competitions include the district winner of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, first place in the National Opera Association Voice Competition, first place in The Pro Arts Society of Philadelphia, finalist in The MacAllister Awards Competition, Mathais Winner in The MacAllister Awards, finalist in the Palm Beach Atlantic Voice Competition, finalist in the National Federation of Music Clubs Voice Competition, semi-finalist in the Palm Beach Opera Competition and semi-finalist in the Oratorio Society of New York Competition. Jones-Sojola can be heard as Laurie on the Albany recording of *The Tender Land*, recorded in the Czech Republic with the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic Orchestra. Her signature piece "Lord, I Have Seen" can be heard on the American Spiritual Ensemble CD *Ol' Time Religion*. She has recently performed with Morehead University's Symphonic Band, Bach Choir of Pittsburgh as well as the Riverside Symphonia in New Jersey and The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra. Future engagements include Handel's *Messiah* with Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and a CD recording of The 3 Mo Divas.

Peggy Stamps, Dancer, Stage Director

Peggy Stamps is a native of Detroit, MI. Stamps began studying dance and drama at an early age and has had the opportunity to study under many world renowned choreographers and acting coaches including Sara Yarborough and Keith Lee (former soloists with The Alvin Ailey Dance Company), Robin Wilson (founding member of Urban Bush Women), Barbara Sullivan (Atlanta Dance Theatre) and Mike Lemmon (casting director, *The Sixth Sense*). Stamps has used her training while landing roles in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *A Chorus Line* and as Linda Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. Stamps is also an accomplished product spokesperson and has appeared on cable networks in the U.S. and

Canada on over 200 occasions. Under the encouragement of her mentors, Stamps began focusing on choreography and stage direction. Over the past 15 years, Stamps has choreographed and/or directed over 100 stage productions and concert works. Stamps, however, has always maintained her love for the performance of modern dance to the spiritual (the performance style danced by her first mentor). This propelled her to join the American Spiritual Ensemble in its second year. Stamps has since this time served as a solo dancer, stage director and assistant tour manager for the group. She is a freelance choreographer/director and is also an instructor of stage movement for the University of Kentucky Opera Performance Program. Stamps is a graduate of Purdue University.

Kevin Thompson, Bass

Kevin Thompson has performed operatic roles such as Sarastro, Grandpa Moss, Colline, Il Commendatore, Sparafucile and covered Frank Maurrant. He has been the bass soloist in such orchestral works as Dubois's *Seven Last Words of Christ*, Hadyn's *The Creation* (*Die Schöpfung*), *Lord Nelson Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* sung in Russian and most recently his first Verdi's *Requiem*. Thompson was born in Washington, D.C., and graduated in 2002 from The Juilliard School. Thompson has performed at the Barns of Wolftrap, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Pentagon and with the United States Naval Band. He has won numerous awards, most recently in the International Don Giovanni Competition in Verona, Italy. He was also a finalist in the National Symphony Competition and a full scholarship recipient in the AIMS Music Festival in Graz, Austria. This past summer he was awarded Honorable Mention in the International Meistersinger Competition in Austria. In 2005 he was commissioned by artist Janet Cardiff to record for the Smithsonian, Hirshhorn Gallery in Washington, D.C., in an audio walk project titled "Words Drawn in Water." He can be heard singing the famous "Old Man River" in its permanent collection on the National Mall. "The voice booms, roars, rumbles through his 6'5" frame and bellows forth when he sings even when he speaks a Basso Profundo," says *The Washington Post*.

Linda Thompson Williams, Mezzo-Soprano

Linda Thompson Williams is a native of Brooklyn, NY, and pleased to debut with the ASE. Her career began at an early age performing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In recent years, Thompson Williams has enjoyed a diverse career in opera, musical, TV and film. She has performed with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Metropolitan Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Covent Garden, performing roles in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. She sang the role of Naomi in the world premiere of *Noa Ain's The Outcast* at Houston Grand Opera, Addie in Blitzstein's *Regina* with Nashville Opera, and at the Spoleto Festival in the Philip Glass/Allen Ginsberg collaboration *Hydrogen Jukebox*. She is featured on the recording of *Porgy and Bess* with the Nashville Symphony on the Decca record label. Other performances include, Queenie in *Show Boat* with the Gateway Playhouse and the Livent/Hal Prince production as Bloody Mary in *South Pacific* at the Sacramento Music Circus, Baba in Menotti's *The Medium*, The Four Seasons Concert Series as part of the Yachats Music Festival and in Linda Twine's *Cantata Changed My Name* with the Spirituals Project in Denver. Television and film work include *Law and Order SVU*, *Law and Order Criminal Intent*, *The Chris Rock Show*, *Little Manhattan*, *The Rebound*, *911 Situation* directed by Ali LeRoi, *Before The Devil Knows You're Dead* and *100 Centre Street*, both directed by Sidney Lumet.

John Wesley Wright, Tenor

John Wesley Wright is known for his artistic and soulful interpretations of music from baroque to Broadway. In addition to singing a nationally televised Christmas Eve concert at the Royal Palace for the Belgian Royal Family, he has performed in opera houses, concert halls and festivals throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. With a host of opera and oratorio roles, art songs, spirituals and cabaret music in his repertoire, Wright's current season includes performances of Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and tours with the internationally acclaimed American Spiritual Ensemble. Highlighted in the PBS documentary film *The Spirituals: Featuring The American Spiritual Ensemble*, released nationally in February 2007, Wright is gold medalist and top prizewinner of the Savannah Music Festival American Traditions Vocal Competition 2000. He has also claimed top prizes from the National Federation of Music Clubs, Metropolitan Opera National Council, Bel Canto Regional Artists, Ohio's Vocal Resource Network Art Song Competition and the International Schubert Competition in Vienna, Austria. Wright is a native of Rome, GA, and holds degrees from Maryville College and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He is an active vocal consultant, clinician and leader of workshops on "African-American Song Tradition" in schools, churches and colleges. Wright served eight years as Artist-in-Residence at the University of Dayton and now resides in Salisbury, MD, where he is instructor of voice, director of Opera Workshop and coordinator of many vocal activities at Salisbury University.



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NOTE FROM THE PRESENTER

When I was invited to join the American Spiritual Ensemble in 2006, I quickly learned what an immense privilege it was. Imagine three times a year being enveloped by the warmest of voices, the most generous of spirits and the poignant, stirring melodies of the American Negro Slave. Such is my experience with the American Spiritual Ensemble.

With performances in schools and churches, concert halls and cathedrals, it is the mission of the American Spiritual Ensemble to keep the Negro slave melody and its profound historical significance alive. This week marks ASE's second visit to the Salisbury area. The presence of such a group on campus is of the utmost importance. I am so thankful that my students, some of whom you will hear today, have begun to garner through study, research and performance, the vast artistic, educational, emotional and technical value of the spiritual. It is my vision that these values along with residencies by the American Spiritual Ensemble become constant.

Enjoy this concert by the American Spiritual Ensemble!

John Wesley Wright

Instructor of Voice, Salisbury University

Member of the American Spiritual Ensemble since '06

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